5   Email Prompts

In this assignment you will be writing emails given the situation described in the text. Before writing each email, evaluate the audience, intention and how the medium effects the effectiveness of your communication.

To complete the assignment, you will need to write an email for each situation, making sure to name who the email is being sent to. You must also, for each email, write a short paragraph describing why you choose to write what you did. In particular, evaluate your communication, paying particular attention to any risks that sending the email poses.

Grading Rubric

To receive full credit, each email must be well-written and in-line with the standards set out in class. Pay particular attention to grammar, as any errors along this dimensions will result in a significant grade deduction. For the auxiliary paragraph describing your communication, please answer the following questions: "What risks are you incurring by sending this email?" and "Are there other strategies I may wish to consider in this situation?" As with the email, the auxiliary paragraph will be graded based on content, with a focus on grammar.

LinkedIn Affiliate Marketing: Making an Error

You have been working at LinkedIn for the last few months on a new project: Sales Recommender ("SR"), which is an affiliate marketing tool. SR works like this - if you sign up for SR as a "Salesman" and someone in your network introduces you to someone outside of your network who then generates a sale, you can give "X" free month's subscription to LinkedIn Premium to the person inside your network who linked you to the person outside of your network, or a cash tip.

Your job on this project was to estimate how much this tip, or "X" should be using some price sensitivity data that you have about LinkedIn customers, coupled with a large number of survey results from salespeople on LinkedIn. While a survey isn't a perfect mechanism, the size of the sample coupled with the response rate leads you to believe in its veracity.

You've run the data a number of times, and have come to the conclusion that you should give away 3 months of premium as a tip. However, on the night before the product's launch, you re-ran the data and noticed something interesting: it appeared the survey wasn't localized properly and people were putting the results in their home country currency and not US dollars. After fixing this issue, you re-ran your analysis and came to the conclusion

that the proper tip should be 14 days, not 3 months. Because of the gross disparity between your prior tip estimate and current tip estimate, you believe that if the product goes live in its current state, it will be a dud. People will use it once, forget about it, and all the hard work put into it will be for naught.

Your boss has already left for the day and you need to fire off an email letting him know about this issue.

Getting Dragged into a Conversation

Over the last 6 months you've been working hard at Zynga, the free-to-play video game company on their cross-title data team. It has been a fun job so far and you were glad to make the decision to work here, rather than BigLegal.com. In your spare time you've been doing some analysis on the effectiveness of cross game advertising. In particular, some games at Zynga show advertisements for other Zynga games[1], rather than selling ads to the highest bidder. You were wondering which one had higher click-through-rates, since it could be considered a proxy for the likability of the advertisements being shown.[2]

While advertising isn't in your domain, you are familiar enough with the database to be able to, with a few quick queries, get this information. Surprisingly, the cross-promotional advertisements had half the click through rates of the non-Zynga advertisements. "That's interesting," you think and turning around to another person in your group, you casually mention this fact, which she is also surprised about. Thinking nothing of it, you return your attention to the matter at hand: Estimating the long-term-value of customers in the newest social casino game.

A week later, you receive the following email (note that you are me@zygna.com) from your boss, John Stamos, the director of analytics at Zynga.com. This email also includes Kathleen, who is the VP of Marketing and Kim, Benny and Hunter who are the other data analysts under Mark. How will you respond to this email?

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[1]We call these "House" or cross-promotion advertisements.

[2]A click through rate is equal to $\frac{\text{\# Clicks}}{\text{\# Ads Shown}}$

From: John Stamos <John@zynga.com>
Date: Wed, Sep 16, 2015 at 5:05 PM
Subject: FW: Click-through Rates
To: me@zygna.com, kim@zygna.com, benny@zynga.com, Hunter@zygna.com
?
————- Forwarded message ————-
From: kathleen <kathy@zynga.com>
Date: Wed, Sep 16, 2015 at 2:05 PM
Subject: Click-through Rates
To: John Stamos <John@zynga.com>
John –

I've been dealing with a bit of an issue. I wanted to let you know that I don't appreciate
your team spreading misinformation regarding our advertising efforts. Turns out one of
your data analysts has been telling people that our cross-promotional efforts are only
half as effective as the advertisements that we show for other titles. I'm not sure where
this information came from and what, so-called "data" your data-team is using, but the
marketing analysts have spent significant amounts of time balancing a number of important
factors to optimize, such as how much we get paid for each advertisements. The last thing
I need is another data analyst undercutting their work behind their back.

If you could fix your team, it would be appreciated.

Kathy.

PIP

Last year you hired a junior data analyst, Rebecca, straight out of undergrad. Like a lot of people in her position, she isn't the most professional employee. In particular:

1. She is the last one to leave each work happy hour and comes in obviously hung over the next day

2. She has often missed her team's daily 10 AM scrum, instead showing up around 11AM

3. She has expressed significant negativity regarding both the direction of the company and the product she is working on

4. She has obvious "favorites": People she will work hard for, but if you aren't one of them, the work product you receive is on sub-standard quality

While you have been fairly lenient with her, the interactions that she is having with others has gotten HR's attention. After talking it over with Tom, the director of HR, you've decided to implement a Performance Improvement Plan or "PIP" with Rebecca. The purpose of the PIP is to make it clear that if her behavior doesn't change that she won't have a job. The downside of this is that Rebecca, when focused, has proven to be a creative and smart thinker. The value that she brings is being undercut by this behavior, so you need to correct it.

Because of a number of legal issues around employee behavior, Tom has given the first talk to her, informing her that she is on PIP and outlining the reasons why. As her direct supervisor, it is your job to document, in email, the specifics regarding how she needs to improve, making sure to BCC Tom on that email. After this email has been sent, you will print it out and go over it with her in a 1-to-1 meeting.